

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13
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TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MNUC, PK

SUBJECT: NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PLANT IN PAKISTAN

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION, ON JANUARY 12 FBIS DAILY REPORT
CARRIED FOLLOWING ITEM FROM AFP HONG KONG.
2. BEGIN TEXT:

ISLAMABAD, JAN 8 (AFP)--PAKISTAN IS DISSATISFIED WITH
FRENCH DELIVERY DELAYS ON A NUCLEAR PROCESSING PLANT, WHOSE
CONSTRUCTION HAS RUN INTO STRONG OPPOSITION FROM THE UNITED
STATES.

AGA SHAHI, SECRETARY-GENERAL AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS, TOLD AFP YESTERDAY THAT FOR NEARLY THE PAST 9
MONTHS FRANCE HAD FAILED TO MEET DELIVERY SCHEDULES SET BY
A 1976 CONTRACT. THE DEAL CALLED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A
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PLANT AT CHASMA, ON THE INDUS RIVER IN WESTERN PUNJAB, TO
RECYCLE NUCLEAR FUEL.

"WE ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THESE DELAYS," MR. AGA SHAHI
SAID.

THERE WAS SHARP NEGATIVE REACTION HERE YESTERDAY TO NEWS

THAT FRANCE HAS SUGGESTED MODIFYING THE PLANT TO PREVENT IT FROM BEING ABLE TO PRODUCE PLUTONIUM, BUT INSTEAD ONLY A MIXTURE OF PLUTONIUM AND URANIUM WHICH COULD NOT BE USED FOR MILITARY PURPOSES.

MR. AGA SHAHI SAID HE HAD ALREADY TURNED DOWN THAT PROPOSAL DURING HIS TRIP TO PARIS LAST SEPTEMBER. HE ADDED THAT PAKISTAN HAD ALREADY AGREED TO ALL THE SAFEGUARD MEASURES PROPOSED BY FRANCE AND WAS READY TO DISCUSS MORE, BUT EXPECTED FRANCE TO LIVE UP TO ITS CONTRACT.

ASKED ABOUT INDICATIONS FROM INFORMED SOURCES HERE THAT THE PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT HAD GIVEN PARIS UNTIL THE END OF THIS MONTH TO ANSWER ITS OBJECTIONS, MR. AGA SHAHI DECLINED TO CALL THIS A "DEADLINE."

THE PAKISTANI FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL ALSO REFUSED TO COMMENT ON THE POSSIBLE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE FRENCH PROPOSALS AND U.S. PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER'S VISITS LAST WEEK TO NEW DELHI AND PARIS.

BOTH FRANCE AND PAKISTAN HAVE BEEN UNDER HEAVY AMERICAN PRESSURE TO ABANDON THE CHASMA PROJECT. FORMER U. S. SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER EVEN THREATENED TO "MAKE AN EXAMPLE" OF PAKISTAN BY CUTTING OFF ALL ECONOMIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AID IF IT WENT AHEAD WITH PLANS TO BUILD THE RECYCLING PLANT.

THE ISSUE HAS REMAINED AT THE CENTER OF THE POLITICAL UPHEAVALS THAT HAVE ROCKED PAKISTAN IN THE PAST YEAR. IN THE MIDST OF VIOLENT OPPOSITION DEMONSTRATIONS THAT FINALLY TOPPLED HIS REGIME WHEN THE ARMED FORCES TOOK OVER TO RESTORE ORDER, FORMER PRIME MINISTER ZULFIQAR ALI BHUTTO ACCUSED THE UNITED STATES OF A VAST PLOT AGAINST HIS GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO STOP CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHASMA PLANT.

GENERAL MOHAMED ZIAUL HAQ, WHO LED THE MILITARY TAKEOVER LAST JULY, IN TURN PROMISED TO HOLD FRANCE TO ITS AGREEMENTS.

IT WOULD NOW BE POLITICALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT TO BACK DOWN AND ABANDON THE CONTRACT SIGNED WITH FRANCE WITHOUT IMMEDIATELY BEING ACCUSED OF "BETRAYING" THE COUNTRY.

SO FAR THE CHASMA PLANT, DUE TO BE COMPLETED AROUND 1981

OR 1982, AMOUNTS TO NO MORE THAN FOUNDATIONS AND SOME WALLS
, AS ALL "SENSITIVE" MATERIAL IS BEING HELD UP IN FRANCE.
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